

COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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"A MODERATE and temperate Reform in the Abuses of the Constitution is due to the people, who being on their part just to the monarchical and aristocratical branches of the Constitution, who commit no invasion of the rights, and seek no abridgements of the powers of either, are entitled to have their own share in the legislation of their country, freed from the unjust usurpations of others, and to possess undivided, and to exercise uncontrolled by the other branches of the government, those rights which this happy Constitution, in the matchless excellence of its principles, has solely and exclusively allotted to the people. A Reform of such a character may lessen the means, and diminish the opportunities of corrupting legislation, both in its source and in its progress; it may reduce the influence by which unconstitutional ministers preserve their power, but it will save the nation from their profusion, and perpetuate that Constitution which all equally profess to venerate: Such a Reform I believe cannot, with perfect safety, be long delayed; the more readily and cheerfully those rights which belong only to the people are restored by those who at present, in too many instances, possess and exercise them, the more firm and established will be the present happy form of our government, the more safe from risque and danger will be the just prerogatives of the crown, and the peculiar acknowledged hereditary privileges of this House."—*LORD LAUDERDALE'S Protest, in the House of Lords, 31 May 1792.*

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TO THE INDEPENDENT PEOPLE OF HAMPSHIRE.

LETTER III.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

Whether the present state of the Representation be consonant with the principles of that Constitution, which has so long been the boast of Englishmen?

GENTLEMEN;

I. BEFORE I proceed to the discussion of this question, suffer me, for one moment, to advert to an assertion, which has been made by more than one member of the House of Commons; namely, that the country does not wish for a Reform of Parliament. Precisely what these gentlemen may mean, when they say "the country," neither you nor I can positively tell; but, I think, it would be extremely difficult for any man to devise a method, by which to draw from a country, containing so many people as this, any thing better intitled to the appellation of the general wish, than that expression of a wish for Reform, which has now been uttered in this Kingdom. It is notorious, that there is scarcely any portion of the people, who may be deemed at liberty to express their opinions, who have not decidedly declared for Reform. Even in Cornwall, where, if any where, the cause of Reform might reasonably be expected to meet with few friends, a County Meeting, held at Bodmin on the 15th instant, resolved, "That the corruptions which have been suffered to accumulate to so grievous an extent in this country, are to be traced to the defective state of the representation; that it is, therefore, the

"firm conviction of this Meeting, that a Reform in the representation of the people in the Commons House of Parliament, is the only effectual corrective of existing abuses; and that the only security against future corruptions, will be the restoring to the people that share of the elective franchise which the public good requires, and to which they are entitled by the principles of the British Constitution."—It is but just to the County of Cornwall, as well as to the cause of Reform, to state, which I do upon certain information, that Lord Eliot, Lord de Dunstanville, Mr. F. Gregor, Mr. F. G. Glanville, Mr. William Rashleigh, Mr. Charles Rashleigh, and several other of those, who are well known to have a deep interest in the numerous boroughs in that County, were present at the Meeting, and that, notwithstanding their opposition, the Resolutions were carried by a majority of fifty to one. It is also worthy of notice, that the Resolutions were brought forward by Mr. Colman Rashleigh, a near relation of two of the above named gentlemen, who are well known to have the largest share in the management of the Cornish boroughs. It is further proper to state, that Lord de Dunstanville and Mr. Gregor, who took an active part in the debate, said, that they had no objection to a vote of thanks to Mr. Wardle; though it will be recollected, that the king's ministers, in the House of Commons, declared their resolution to oppose a vote of thanks to that gentleman, if it were brought forward. A similar declaration was, you will recollect, made by all our opponents at Winchester, which it is

very material to bear in mind, because it shows, that even the supporters of the ministers have not, when they come to meet the people face to face, the courage to maintain the declarations of those ministers.—The result of this Meeting in Cornwall is a good specimen, but it is no more than a specimen, of what has passed, and is passing, in every part of the kingdom, where the people have the liberty to assemble for the purposes of political discussion; and yet, there are men, who scruple not to assert, and that, too, without the smallest reservation, that “the country” does *not* wish for a Parliamentary Reform!

II. Now, Gentlemen, in coming to the question before us, when we talk of the *Constitution*, we surely mean, that there is *something*; something *really in existence*, to which that favourite word applies? We surely have not talked and written and preached and even prayed so long about a thing, which has no existence in the world, and which is merely a creature of the imagination? Well, then, what is this *Constitution*? Fully to define it, in a short compass, would be impossible; because the definition is to be drawn from numerous usages and laws. But, a definition, quite sufficient for our present purpose, is this: that the Constitution provides, that no man shall suffer punishment, in any way, unless he be guilty of an offence known to the laws; that no man shall be held in confinement, unless upon sufficient cause being legally shown; that the dwelling, or possessions, of no man shall be entered into against his consent, unless for sufficient cause legally shown; that the property of no man shall be taken from him, unless for just cause legally shown; that the property of no man shall be taken from him, in the way of taxes, without his consent; and that, in order that these rights and liberties may be preserved, the people shall be represented in a Commons House of Parliament, the members of which shall be elected by the people themselves.

Such is the substance of the Constitution of England; that constitution, for which we are called upon to fight and to make pecuniary sacrifices enormous, and for which we are ready to fight and make any sacrifices that can be named.—It is easy to perceive, however, that, as far as regards the safety either of the persons or the property of the people, all must finally depend upon the state of the Representation

they be, or be not, in reality, represented in the Commons' House; or, in other words, whether the members of that house be, or be not, *chosen by the people*.

From *Magna Charta* down to the *Act of Settlement*, there runs through the whole of our laws, this leading principle; namely, that nothing shall be taken from the people, in taxes, *without their own consent*; and, indeed, *Magna Charta* itself was nothing more than a declaration and confirmation of what was the law of the land before. That every individual is to give his consent to a tax, when the tax is demanded of him, neither is nor ever was the notion; but, that no tax is to be levied upon any man, without the consent of the people, *given by their representatives*, in a general assembly, always was the notion, and the settled doctrine of the kingdom of England. Indeed, it is this, and this alone, which distinguishes the government of England from that of any state subject to the will of a despot; for, take away this, and we are subject immediately to lose any part of our property that those who have the sword of authority in their hands choose to take from us. Without this, the people have no check upon the Crown, or upon the Aristocracy; and, it will be easily seen, that, without this check, the sparing of even our persons must, with any ministry, be merely a question of policy.

With respect to the mode of appointing persons to represent the people, divers regulations have been made, in order to insure the operation of probity and of good sense in this important business. With regard to the qualifications of the representatives, the description, at a more remote period, was less definite; latterly a landed qualification has been settled; but, always, it was a principle, that members of parliament should be men of substantial property, which was, of itself, a sufficient check against any thing of too democratical a cast. On the part of the people, *property* was, as, in reason, it must be, the basis of the right, or duty, to choose members of parliament; and, there could be, in remote times, no distinction as to the different sorts of property, because those who were *not freeholders* had, in fact, *no property at all*, and were merely the vassals of the Barons and other great men. But, while time has completely worn away this character of vassal, and while copyholders and other owners of real property, have, as to all other purposes, become of full as much consequence as the owners of free-

hold land, the right, or duty, of voting, has, with regard to the counties, been perseveringly confined to the freeholders: the name of freeholder has been kept up to the utter destruction of the constitutional principle of suffrage. And, as to the boroughs, which were called upon to send representatives, they were so called upon, because they were, at the time, places of the *greatest trade* in the kingdom, when it is notorious, that, at this time, many of them have dwindled into mere villages or hamlets, some of them containing scarcely a single house. In those times *Old Sarum* was a considerable place, and *Manchester* a place of no consideration at all; and, in order to have a striking view of the unreasonableness of still leaving to the former the choice of two members, while the latter chooses no member at all, we have only to suppose the case of calling upon *Old Sarum* to pay more in taxes than *Manchester*, because it *formerly* paid more in taxes. If such a demand were made, who would not exclaim against its injustice? Should we not hear it said, that the scythe of time had disabled *Old Sarum* from paying its ancient proportion of taxes? Well, then, shall the effect of the attacks of time furnish no argument in favour of a change in the representation, when it is found to be unanswerable in favour of a change in behalf of the places represented? To leave the choosing of members of parliament to old and decayed boroughs is as contrary to reason as it would be to expect from age and decrepitude the functions of youth. Whenever any invasion of the rights of the people has taken place, and has called forth an appeal to our ancient laws, we have been answered by the remark, that one of the great excellencies of the constitution is, that it is *constantly capable of amendment*; and is it not very strange, then, that those who have thus answered us, should, as to this point, wherein the hand of time has been so manifestly destructive, refuse, and represent as an attempt at *innovation*, any proposition to alter or amend? The truth is, that to leave the choosing of members to rotten boroughs and to forty shilling freeholders is the *innovation*; this is the innovation, and time is the innovator. The constitution makes real *property* the basis of representation in the counties, and *trade* in the towns and cities; therefore, where time has removed this basis, there is an innovation introduced; and to apprehend the destruction of the ancient fabric of the constitution

from giving *Manchester* representatives instead of *Gatton* or *Old Sarum*, is just as wise as it would be to apprehend the fall of a building from the removing of a rotten pillar and putting a sound one in its stead.

III. Let us now see what has been written upon this subject by that author, to whom our adversaries, in all other cases, think proper to appeal. I mean the famous Commentator on the Law of England, Mr. BLACKSTONE, who, in 1708, when his work was first published, was a *Professor of Law* in the University of Oxford, and who, in consequence of his writing that work, was afterwards made a *Judge*. Let us who are accused of *clamour* and *factiousness*, and of *wild* notions and *chimerical* projects; let us, to get rid at once of all this, appeal to the book of Blackstone; and then let those, who defend the corruptions of parliament, and who abuse all those, who dislike those corruptions, direct their abuse towards this great legal authority. "The *Commons*," says Blackstone, "consist of *all such men of any property*, in the kingdom, as have "not seats in the house of lords; every "one of whom *has a voice in parliament*, "either personally, or by his representatives. "In a free state, every man, who is supposed a free agent, ought to be, in some "measure, his own-governor; and therefore a branch, at least, of the legislative "power should reside in the whole body "of the people. And this power, when "the territories of the state are small and "its citizens easily known, should be exercised by the people in their aggregate "or collective capacity, as was wisely ordained in the petty republics of Greece, "and the first rudiments of the Roman "state." . . . "In so large a "state as ours it is very wisely contrived, "that the people should do that by their "representatives, which it is impracticable to perform in person: representatives, chosen by a number of minute and "separate districts, wherein all the voters "are, or easily may be, distinguished. The "counties are, therefore, represented by "knights, elected by the proprietors of lands; "the cities and boroughs are represented "by citizens and burgesses, chosen by the "mercantile part or supposed trading interest of the nation." . . . After a description of the great powers of parliament; the unlimited and unchecked powers of that body, he proceeds thus:—"So that it is a matter most essential to "the liberties of this kingdom, that such "members be delegated to this important

" trust, as are most eminent for their probity,
 " their fortitude, and their knowledge; for it
 " was a known apothegm of the great lord
 " treasurer Burleigh, " that England
 " could never be ruined but by a parlia-
 " ment: " and, as sir Matthew Hale ob-
 " serves, this being the highest and greatest
 " court, over which none other can have ju-
 " risdiction in the kingdom, if by any means
 " a mis-government should any way fall upon
 " it, the subjects of this kingdom are left with-
 " out all manner of remedy. To the same
 " purpose the PRESIDENT MONTESQUIEU,
 " though I trust too hastily, presages;
 " that as Rome, Sparta, and Carthage have
 " lost their liberty and perished, so the
 " constitution of England will in time lose
 " its liberty, will perish: it will perish,
 " whenever the legislative power shall be-
 " come more corrupt than the executive." . . .

" With regard to taxes: it is the antient,
 " indisputable privilege and right of the
 " house of commons, that all grants of sub-
 " sidies or parliamentary aids do begin in
 " their house, and are first bestowed by
 " them; although their grants are not ef-
 " fectual to all intents and purposes, until
 " they have the assent of the other two
 " branches of the legislature. The gene-
 " ral reason, given for this exclusive pri-
 " vilege of the house of commons, is, that
 " the supplies are raised upon the body of
 " the people, and, therefore, it is proper
 " that they alone should have a right of taxing
 " themselves. This reason would be unan-
 " swerable, if the commons taxed none but
 " themselves: but it is notorious, that a
 " very large share of property is in the
 " possession of the house of lords; that
 " this property is equally taxable, and
 " taxed, as the property of the commons;
 " and, therefore, the commons not being
 " the sole persons taxed, this cannot be
 " the reason of their having the sole right
 " of raising and modelling the supply.
 " The true reason, arising from the spirit
 " of our constitution, seems to be this: The
 " lords being a permanent and hereditary
 " body, created at pleasure by the king,
 " are supposed more liable to be influ-
 " enced by the crown, and when once in-
 " fluenced to continue so, than the com-
 " mons, who are a temporary elective
 " body, freely nominated by the people. It
 " would therefore be extremely dangerous,
 " to give them any power of framing new
 " taxes for the subject."—That is to
 " say, it would be extremely dangerous to give
 " a power of taxing the people to any per-
 " sons, liable to be under the influence of the

Crown.—He next comes to the quali-
 " fications demanded of the electors; and,
 " from his account of this part of the consti-
 " tution, it will be easily seen, what is now
 " wanted in order to restore the spirit of that
 " constitution.—" The true reason of re-
 " quiring any qualification, with regard to
 " property, in voters, is to exclude such per-
 " sons as are in so mean a situation that they
 " are esteemed to have no will of their own.
 " If these persons had votes, they would be
 " tempted to dispose of them under some undue
 " influence or other. This would give a great,
 " an artful, or a wealthy man, a larger share
 " in elections than is consistent with general
 " liberty. If it were probable that every
 " man would give his vote freely, and
 " without influence of any kind, then,
 " upon the true theory and genuine prin-
 " ciples of liberty, every member of the
 " community, however poor, should have
 " a vote in electing those delegates, to
 " whose charge is committed the disposal
 " of his property, his liberty, and his life.
 " But, since that can hardly be expected
 " in persons of indigent fortunes, or such
 " as are under the immediate dominion of
 " others, all popular states have been oblig-
 " ed to establish certain qualifications;
 " whereby some, who are suspected to
 " have no will of their own, are excluded
 " from voting, in order to set other indivi-
 " duals, whose wills may be supposed inde-
 " pendent, more thoroughly upon a level
 " with each other." . . .

" The knights of the shires are to be
 " chosen of people dwelling in the same
 " counties; whereof every man shall have
 " a freehold to the value of forty shillings
 " by the year within the county; which,
 " by subsequent statutes, is to be clear of
 " all charges and deductions, except par-
 " liamentary and parochial taxes. The
 " knights of shires are the representatives
 " of the landholders, or landed interest, of
 " the kingdom, their electors must there-
 " fore have estates in lands or tenements,
 " within the county represented: these
 " estates must be freehold, that is, for term
 " of life at least; because beneficial leases
 " for long terms of years were not in use
 " at the making of these statutes, and co-
 " pyholders were then little better than vil-
 " lains, absolutely dependent upon their
 " lord: this freehold must be of forty
 " shillings annual value; because that sum
 " would, then, with proper industry, fur-
 " nish all the necessaries of life, and render
 " the freeholder, if he pleased, an indepen-
 " dent man. . . .

"As for the electors of citizens and burgesses, these are supposed to be the mercantile part or trading interest of this kingdom. But as trade is of a fluctuating nature, and seldom long fixed in a place, it was formerly left to the crown to summon *pro et nata* the most flourishing towns to send representatives to parliament. So that, as towns increased in trade, and grew populous, they were admitted to a share in the legislature. But the misfortune is, that the deserted boroughs continued to be summoned, as well as those to whom their trade and inhabitants were transferred."

... He next comes to the qualifications and disqualifications of representatives.—"That in strictness, all members ought to be inhabitants of the places for which they are chosen: but this is entirely disregarded. That no persons concerned in the management of any duties or taxes created since 1692, except the commissioners of the treasury, nor any of the officers following, (namely, commissioners of prizes, transports, sick and wounded, wine licences, navy and victualling; secretaries or receivers of prizes; comptrollers of the army accounts; agents for regiments; governors of plantations and their deputies; officers of Minorca or Gibraltar; officers of the excise and customs; clerks or deputies in the several offices of the treasury, exchequer, naval, victualling, admiralty, pay of the army or navy, secretaries of state, salt, stamps, appeals, wine licences, hackney coaches, hawkers, and pedlars) nor any persons that hold any new office under the crown created since 1705, are capable of being elected members. That no person having a pension under the crown during pleasure, or for any term of years, is capable of being elected. That if any member accepts an office under the crown, except an officer in the army or navy accepting a new commission, his seat is void; but such member is capable of being re-elected;" which latter, it must be observed, is in consequence of an act, made to repeal a part of the act, which placed the king's family upon the throne of England.—I conclude with what he says about the value of really free elections.—"It is essential to the very being of parliament, that elections should be absolutely free; therefore, all undue influences upon the electors are illegal, and strongly prohibited. For Mr. Locke ranks it among those breaches of trust in the executive

magistrate, which according to his notions, amount to a dissolution of the government, "if he employs the force, "treasure and officers of the society to corrupt the representatives, or openly to pre-engage the electors, and prescribe what manner of persons shall be chosen. "For thus to regulate candidates and electors, and new model the ways of election, what is it," says he, "but to cut up the government by the roots, and poison the very fountain of public security."

Such, Gentlemen, is BLACKSTONE'S description of the Constitution of England, as far as relates to the composition of the House of Commons, and to the share which the People ought to have in the composing of that House. Let us, then, see how the fact squares with this description; let us ask ourselves, whether that which Blackstone says ought to be the state of things, in this respect, really is the state of things at this present time; or, in other words, whether we now have that constitution, which the friends of corruption accuse us of a desire to destroy.—Have all men of property (except the peers) a voice in parliament, either personally or by their representatives?—Is there a branch of the legislative power, which resides wholly in the people?—Are the county members elected by the proprietors of the land?—Are the borough members elected by the mercantile or trading interests of the nation?—Are the members of the House of Commons persons most eminent for their probity, their fortitude, or their knowledge?—Has there never, by any means, a misgovernment fallen upon that House?—Do the people really, by their representatives, tax themselves?—Is the qualification for voters such as to exclude persons in so mean a situation, that they are esteemed to have no will of their own, and are liable to be tempted to dispose of their votes under some undue influence or other?—Is the income of forty shillings a year now sufficient to render the freeholder an independent man?—Are placemen and pensioners excluded from seats in the House of Commons; or, do the people really acquire the right of choosing them anew after they have accepted of places?—Are elections absolutely free, which Blackstone avers to be essential to the very being of parliament?—And finally, is the force or treasure, or are the offices, of the society, never employed to corrupt the representatives, or openly to pre-engage

the electors, and prescribe what manner of persons shall be chosen?

IV. Leaving it to you, Gentlemen, to answer these questions, I shall now proceed to state certain undeniable facts, appertaining to this subject; and then I shall leave you to draw your own conclusions, and to decide the question, whether a Reform of the House of Commons, be, or be not necessary.—THE FIRST of these facts is, That, in the year 1793, a Petition was presented to the House of Commons, by CHARLES GREY, Esq. (now Earl Grey), in which Petition it was, amongst other things, stated, that *one hundred and fifty-four individuals*, did, by their patronage (or unlawful influence) send *three hundred and seven* Members to the House of Commons, forming, of course, a decided majority of the 558 Members of which the House then consisted; and that the petitioners were ready to prove this at the bar of the House.—SECOND: That, in the said Petition, the petitioners declared, that they had the most reasonable grounds to suspect, that no less than *one hundred and fifty* of the Members of the Commons' House, owed their elections entirely to the *interference of Peers*.—THIRD: That the Statute Law declares, that Peers *shall not interfere* in the election of any Member of the Commons' House.—FOURTH: That, for many years past, Seats in the House of Commons have been publicly advertised for sale.—FIFTH: That, on the 10th of December, 1779, the House of Commons passed a Resolution in these words: "That it is *highly criminal* for any Minister or Ministers, or any other *Servant of the Crown in Great Britain*, *directly or indirectly*, to make use of the *power of his office, in order to influence the election of Members of Parliament*, and that an attempt to exercise that influence *was an attack upon the dignity, the honour and the independence of Parliament*, *an infringement of the rights and the liberties of the people*, and an *attempt to sap the basis of our free and happy Constitution*."—SIXTH: That, on the 25th of April last, the following Resolutions were, by LORD ARCHIBALD HAMILTON, moved in the House of Commons: "1. That it appears to the House, from the evidence on the table, that Lord Visc. Castlereagh, in the year 1805, shortly after he had quitted the situation of President of the Board of Controul, and being a Privy Counsellor and Secretary of State, did place at the disposal of Lord Clancarty, a Member of the same Board,

the nomination to a Writership, in order to facilitate his procuring a Seat in Parliament.—2. That it was owing to a disagreement among the subordinate parties, that this transaction did not take effect; and—3. That by this conduct Lord Castlereagh had been guilty of a gross violation of his duty as a Servant of the Crown; an abuse of his patronage as President of the Board of Controul: and an attack upon the purity of that House," which Resolutions were *rejected* by the House.—SEVENTH: That, upon the same day, and upon the same occasion, the House passed a Resolution in substance as follows:—"That while it was the *bounden duty of that House to maintain at all times a jealous guard upon its purity*, and not to suffer any attempt upon its privileges to pass unnoticed, the attempt in the present instance (that of Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Reding), *not having been carried into effect*, that House did not think it then necessary to proceed to any criminatory Resolutions respecting the same."—EIGHTH: That, on the 11th of the present month of May, MR. MADOCKS made, in the House of Commons, a charge in substance as follows: "I affirm, then, that MR. DICK *purchased a Seat in the House of Commons for the borough of Cashel*, through the *agency of the Honourable Henry Wellesley, who acted for, and on behalf of, the Treasury*: that, upon a recent question of the last importance, when Mr. Dick had determined to vote according to his conscience, the noble Lord, CASTLEREAGH, did intimate to that gentleman the necessity of either his *voting with the government, or resigning his seat in that House*; and that Mr. Dick, sooner than vote against principle, did make choice of the latter alternative, and vacate his seat accordingly. To this transaction I charge the Right Honourable Gentleman, MR. PERCEVAL, as *being privy and having connived at it*. This I will engage to prove by witnesses at your Bar, if the House will give me leave to call them."—NINTH: That, at the end of a long Debate upon this subject, the question was taken upon a motion FOR AN INQUIRY into the matter; that there appears from the Report of the Proceedings, published in the papers, to have been 395 Members present; that, out of the 395, only 85 voted for the motion, which, of course, was lost, there being 310, out of the 395, who VOTED AGAINST THE MOTION FOR IN-

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QUIRY.—TENTH: That, in the year 1802, this same Mr. PERCEVAL, being then Attorney General, prosecuted PHILIP HAMLIN, a Tinman of Plymouth, for having committed the crime of offering Mr. Addington £2,000, to give him a place in the Custom House; that, upon this occasion, Mr. Perceval demanded judgment upon the said Hamlin, for the sake of *public justice*; and that the Judge, after expatiating upon the “incalculable mischief,” to which such crimes must naturally lead, sentenced the said Hamlin to pay a fine of a hundred pounds to the king, and to be imprisoned for three calendar months.—ELEVENTH: That in the year 1805, Evidence was taken before a Committee of the House of Commons, and was laid before that House, proving that the late minister, PITT, had lent, without the consent or knowledge of Parliament, and without the consent or knowledge of any council of the king, £40,000 of the public money (without any interest paid to the public) to two members of the then House of Commons; and that, when this matter was brought before the House, in 1805, no censure whatever was passed on the said minister, but he was, by a *bill of indemnity*, secured from any punishment for having in such way employed the money of the public.—TWELFTH: That, it appears from a Report, laid before the House of Commons, in the month of June last, in consequence of a motion made by Lord Cochrane, that there then were, in that House, seventy-eight Placemen and Pensioners, who, though part of what they receive is not stated, are, in the said Report, stated to receive 178,994 pounds a year out of the public money.

Now, Gentlemen, to these facts, and to many, many others (others too numerous to state, even in the most brief manner), which might be added to them, I shall not subjoin a single word by way of comment. I wish to avoid every thing like high colouring; every thing like declamation; every thing calculated to rouse any angry passion in your breasts: I wish to avoid even persuasion; I wish to lay the state of the case fairly and clearly before you, and to leave the decision to the intelligence and the rectitude of your own minds. Those of you, who, notwithstanding what has been here stated, may be of opinion, that the present state of the representation in parliament is consonant with the principles of the Constitution of England, will of course, see no justifiable cause for any reform in that representa-

tion; but, those of you, who may think with me, that the present state of the representation is *not* consonant with those admirable principles, will, I trust, be disposed to follow me in my next Letter, into an inquiry respecting *what sort of Reform* it would be just and prudent to adopt.

I am,

Your friend,

W^M. COBBETT.

Bosley, 24 May, 1809.

“ELEMENTS OF REFORM.”

THERE has been published, in London, a pamphlet under this title, and under the name of “MR. WILLIAM COBBETT,” as the author. It consists of passages from my writings, *against* Reform and against Reformers; and, the object of it is, to counteract, by the publication of these passages, the effect of what I am now writing in *favour* of Reform.—That the compilers of such a work should include those passages from the different parts of my works, wherein I have candidly confessed the *error*, under which I wrote what they have selected for publication; that such persons should do this is not to be expected; nor is it to be expected from them to make even fair extracts as far as they go. They have, as might be reasonably expected, garbled every thing that they have touched.—But, while I am very certain, that their publication will wholly fail of its object; while I am certain, that no one will think me bound to praise John Bowles *now*, because I praised him in 1800, when I must almost necessarily be, and when I really was, totally ignorant of what I have since learnt respecting the subject of his writings, as well as respecting his too evident motives; while I am certain, that no one, who has a grain of sense, will think me bound *now* to censure Sir Francis Burdett, because I did severely censure him at a time when I acted under a total misrepresentation of his principles and his character; while I am certain, that no man of common sense, or common honesty, will think me bound to deprecate a Reform of Parliament *now*, because I did deprecate it at a time when I had never known that seats were advertised for sale, and when I had never seen, or dreamt of the possibility of, any thing like what has now come to light and has been proved respecting the House of Commons; while I am certain that the nation, who, with far better opportunities of knowing the truth, were full as much deceived as I was, and whose

change of opinion has kept pace with mine, will not think me *now* bound to applaud a system of politics, war, and finance, of which it was terrified into an approbation ten years ago, and all the mischiefs of which we have since seen exposed; while I am certain, that none but very weak persons indeed will think any man bound to praise any thing after he has discovered it to be unworthy of the praise that he once bestowed on it; while I am certain of all this, I cannot refrain from observing *how favourable a symptom this publication is to the cause of Reform*; how strong an indication it is of the fear, which the friends of corruption entertain, of the effects of that discussion, upon which they perceive me to have seriously entered. In America, my opponents, who were very numerous, and who had far greater talents than the persons, with whom I have now to contend, were driven to a somewhat similar expedient. The public, after having been surfeited with their pamphlets against me, would read no more; when, what did these opponents do? Why, what has now been done here: they published pamphlets *under my name*, and then, for a time at least, they found them *sell*. There were several booksellers at a time living upon my name; actually buying bread and cheese with it. I used to urge the injustice of their not giving me a share; and, really, I think, that the gentlemen here are liable to the same charge; for, not one of them has offered me the smallest acknowledgment. If the public will not read books unless they have my name to them, I think it is but just, that I should have some small part in the gains. I shall be content with less than a Dutch-Commissioner's profit; but something I certainly ought to have.—That those, with whom this pamphlet *originates*, wish, by the publication, to injure the cause of Reform there can be little doubt; and, I think, that there can be as little, that they are, in this effort, counter-acting their own wish. For, in the first place, their flying to my former opinions as affording a contrast to those which I now entertain, upon this subject, is a pretty good proof that they have neither fact nor argument, whereon to meet me upon the merits of the case. In the next place, the errors, which they expose, and which have, long ago, been distinctly confessed by me, only serve to show, in the strongest possible light, how completely I was deceived, and, thereby, to form an apology for

the change of opinion in others. All we want is, as Major Cartwright has said *discussion*; discussion is what these gentlemen are assisting with all their might, and, if they have but a moderate share of discernment, I should think that the *great sale*, which their pamphlet is said to have must leave upon their minds the mortifying conviction of the *popularity* of the “*Elements of Reform, by Mr. Wm. Cobbett*”; for, from this title, it is not a work *against*, but *in favour* of Reform, that the public think they are buying. They think it is a *new* work; a work containing what I have written at *the present time*; and by adopting such a title and taking my name, the publishers themselves confess, that that matter and that name stand high in the public estimation. The publishers are very cautious, in their advertisements, to let fall nothing *hostile* to me; because they know, that by so doing they would injure their sale; and, it is truly curious to see the COURIER and even the MORNING POST trumpeting forth the praises of a *Work on Reform, “by Mr. Wm. Cobbett,”* the effect of which must be this: that all those, who do not read the pamphlet, will look upon those papers as having become converts to my doctrine; while on the other hand, the pamphlet will have no effect at all upon those who do read it, because they have already read my confession of the errors, which it contains.—The doctrine of *consistency*, as now in vogue, is the most absurd that ever was broached. It teaches, that, if you once think well of any person or thing, you must always think well of that person or thing, whatever changes may take place either in them, or in the state of your information respecting them. For instance, if you praise a man to-day, and, to-morrow, receive proof of his having long been a thief, you must still continue to praise him. Where is the man, who has not changed his opinions of men as well as of things? Those who write every day, or every week, must express what they think at the time; but, if new sources of information open to them, they must express what they *then* think, and not with any regard to what they have given as their opinion before.—But, how would this doctrine suit my opponents, if I were to attempt to hold them to. If I am to say, to some of the friends of corruption, “you used to praise me, and why do you not praise me now?” They would, doubtless, answer: “Oh! but, you *then* wrote to please us; and now you

“do not; Owing to your ignorance of us and our views, we *then* were objects of your applause, and *now* we are objects of your censure.” To be sure, nothing could be more reasonable than this. There is nothing at all *inconsistent* in it; but, then, the argument is just as good for me as it is for them.—The truth is, that, as to opinions, no man is to be blamed for a change, except there be strong reason to conclude that the change has proceeded from a *bad motive*; or, rather, that it is not a real, but a pretended change, for the purpose of something selfish or wicked. This is the case, when we see men change their opinions upon exchanging no offices, for offices under the crown; when they have one set of principles for *out of place*, and another set of principles for *in place*. Now, nothing of this sort can possibly be imputed to me; and, in short, it is quite impossible to make any man of sense believe, that the change in my opinions has proceeded from any other cause than that of a sincere conviction, that, in my former opinions, I was wrong.—I am not very anxious to make an apology for the errors of my former opinions; but, surely, without attributing to myself any very extraordinary want of discernment, those errors, when my then peculiar situation he considered, stand in need of nothing by way of excuse. When John Bowles said: “My attachment to the British Monarchy, and to the reigning family, is rooted in my heart’s core; my anxiety for the British throne, pending the dangers to which, in common with every other throne, it has lately been exposed, has embittered my choicest comforts; and I most solemnly vow, before Almighty God, to devote myself, to the end of my days, to the maintenance of that throne.” When John Bowles said this, I praised John Bowles; but, must I praise him *now*?—I have been told, that the King, when he visited Cuffinells in 1804, (and which, in my opinion, he ought not to have been advised to visit) said, the moment he entered the house, “*where is MY FRIEND Cobbett’s Paper?*” This was told to me, not long ago, by one, who, I thought, appeared to think it necessary to remind me of my duty to the king. But, in what instance have I ever shown a want of a due sense of that duty? When have I ever hinted, that the royal office and authority were not essential to the happiness and even to the *liberty* of the people? When have I expressed a wish hostile to the king’s person, autho-

rity, prerogatives, or family? When have I, as these pamphlet compilers would insinuate, expressed any opinion which could justify the inference, that I wished for the predominance of a mob, or the degradation of royalty or aristocracy? The truth is, that I have been constantly labouring to prevent the degradation of both; and, if either has been degraded, it is because my labours have, with respect to them, been unavailing. If I ever did merit the honour of being, by the king himself, called *his friend*, I now merit that honour more than at any former period; because I have now told him *truths*, which nobody else would tell him, and to know which truths is of far more importance to him than the support of all the tribe, who have the insolence to give themselves the exclusive appellation of *King’s Friends*; and who, in an hour of danger to his person or his throne, would, as all the sycophants of the Continent have done, desert him, while, I trust, I should be found ready to hazard my life in his defence. There is no man, in this country, who shall read what I am now writing, that will not acknowledge, that he has a thousand times heard it observed, that “there is *no knowing what may happen*,” upon an event, which we all hope may be distant, but, which we are all sure, must, in the course of nature, take place. I put it to the Reader, *whether this be not a subject of general anxiety?* Whether he be acquainted with *one considerate man*, who does not partake in this anxiety? Is it not, therefore, for those, who really wish for the stability of the kingly government, and for the unimpaired authority of the king and his successors, to use their best endeavours to see things settled upon a solid foundation, *before the event, alluded to, takes place?* It surely is; and, as I am one of those, who think that the only means of obtaining that solidity is to give the people confidence in their Representatives, and thereby reconcile them to their sacrifices, I wish for a Reform of the Commons’ House of Parliament.—Nothing, to me, at least, can be more evident than this: that, to insure the stability of the throne, a Reform in the House of Commons is absolutely necessary. The people, if fairly and fully represented, would grudge nothing to the king, or to his family; and, indeed, that which has recently given so much anxiety and pain to the royal family, may be clearly traced to the same source, whence all the other heart-burnings may be traced. Those, who have dealt in parliamentary

seats, always make common cause with the king; always drag him into the party with them, by accusing their opponents of being *his* enemies; when the fact manifestly is, that the king's legitimate authority, his dignity and his just prerogatives, suffer by such dealings as much as the rights and liberties of the people suffer by them.—There is something in the heart of every man, which impels him to desire, that the person, whom he acknowledges as his *sovereign*, should be clothed with dignity; and, does it not naturally follow, that it must be mortifying to a sensible and honourable people, to see the authority of the king cramped and thwarted by the owners of Boroughs? If, agreeably to the principles of the constitution, the people were represented; if they had nothing to complain of upon this score; never would they wish to interfere with the prerogatives of the king. They love kingly government; and they grudge the king and his family nothing in the way of splendour. It is notorious, that *royal economy* is no favourite virtue with them. But they love their own rights and liberties, without which nothing will make them heartily contented.—Look at the *Pension* and *Sinecure* Lists, those lists which create so much well-grounded complaint. Look at the persons, upon whom the public money is heaped. This, observe, is all done in the name of *the king*. Is this doing justice to the king? Is it doing justice to his present Majesty to hold him forth to his people as having, for instance, bestowed *one thousand five hundred pounds a year* of their money upon *Mrs. Fox*? Will any man deny, that it would be an act the most friendly to the king to set him free from that, the existence of which, and of which alone, could have induced him to put his royal signature to such a grant? Is there a man in the whole kingdom, who can believe, that the king *cheerfully* put his signature to that grant? Yet, he is held forth to his people as having been the author of it; as having made such a grant, in the virtue of a power given him by the constitution for the purpose of supporting the *honour* and *dignity* of his throne!—It is worthy of remark that each party, when out of power, complain of “the *influence of the CROWN*,” of the vast sums of money, and the great number of offices, which “the *CROWN*” has in its gift. This is a very convenient notion to be inculcated by those, who can dispose of seats, and who can force ministers upon the king. To them it is very conve-

nient to represent all that the people dislike as proceeding from the royal will, and, of course, to cause it to be believed, that, in order to get rid of such grants as that to *Mrs. Fox*, and such concerns as those of the *Dutch Commissioners*, we must first get rid of the king, which they know the people would think of with horror. The *borough* influence they never wish us to look at; but, can any man believe that, if it had not been for that influence, the present king would not have driven from his presence the man, who had such a disregard for the feelings of both king and people as to propose the grant to *Mrs. Fox*?—Now, by way of illustration, suppose the king had spurned at this proposition. The consequence would have been the going out of the ministry, who, upon such a point, would, in all probability, have retained their majority in the House. But, upon the supposition that the free voice of his people had been appealed to, would not they, by their choice of members, have expressed their gratitude to him for his care of their interest and their honour?—That man, therefore, is the real friend of the king, of his family, his office and dignity, who would free them, forever, from all influence of this sort; who would leave the king unencumbered with any influence, other than that of the advice of his constitutional counsellors, to make such appointments and grant such favours as he himself should choose; and, I am persuaded, that if what I am now writing should ever reach the ear of his Majesty, he will, upon a due consideration of the matter, still call me, as he is said to have done at Cuffnells, his “*friend Cobbett*.”

There are several subjects, which press forward for observation; but, nothing appeared to me of, comparatively, any importance, at this particular moment, but the subject of Parliamentary Reform. What they are doing in Austria, or in Spain, is of little consequence to us, unless it be really true, that, in the latter country, the *Cortez*, or *representatives of the people*, are, at last, to be assembled. If this be the case, though late, there may be some hope.—The new *loan* and new *taxes* would be worthy of remark; but, really, people are wearied of discussion, where discussion can be of no avail.

WESTMINSTER ELECTION, 1807.

Report of the Committee who conducted the Election, to their Constituents, as-

sembled on the 23rd May, 1809, to celebrate the second Anniversary of the Return of Sir Francis Burdett.

Your Committee have observed with much satisfaction, that the conduct you adopted at the Election, the result of which you are now met to celebrate, has been imperceptibly forcing itself upon the consideration of all thinking men.

In many parts of the Country a disposition to follow that example has been publicly manifested; and in some you have been awarded public thanks for the noble stand you made in support of principles, without which our boasted Constitution is but an empty form.

Your Committee call to your recollection, that, previous to the first Anniversary, the High Bailiff of Westminster had obtained a verdict against your Representative, sir Francis Burdett, for a share of certain expences attending the election of Members of Parliament, under pretence that he was a Candidate, which he was not, and had had the use of the hustings; and also that your Committee had endeavoured to obtain the reconsideration of that verdict, by applying for a new trial, which had been refused by the Court of King's Bench. The consequence of these proceedings has been an expence of upwards of 320*l.* which the contributions of individual electors, and the liberality of other friends to the purity of election, has enabled your Committee in great part to discharge. Since that period actions have been brought by an individual against three of your Committee, under pretence of expences said to be authorised by one or other of them on account of the election. It did not appear on the trial that any such expenditure had been directed by them, or that the disbursement had actually been made by the plaintiff: and, in point of fact, no order for such expenditure was given, it being contrary to the principle and uniform practice of your Committee. The plaintiff, who sued as a pauper, was non-suited; but your Committee were put to the expence of about 70*l.* for costs, in the defence of these actions, which they have no hope of recovering. These are the principal items of charge since the last Anniversary, and your Committee now lay before you the present state of your accounts:—

ACCOUNT OF DISBURSEMENTS AND RECEIPTS.

1807	£.	s.	d.
Expences of the Election to the final close of the Poll	780	14	4

Expences of Chairing, Procession, and presenting the Car to Sir F. Burdett	507	19	2
— of Fees and Gratuities at the House of Commons	6	2	6
— of Printing an "Exposition of the Conduct of the Committee" during the Election	28	10	1
— attending the celebration of the First Anniversary	31	16	0
— of Verdict, Costs, and Execution levied in an Action brought by the High Bailiff against Sir F. Burdett ...	321	0	8
— incurred in defence of three Actions brought by Smith (a pauper) against the Committee	68	7	3
— of collecting Subscriptions and Meetings of the Committee	11	17	0
	£.1,756	7	0
Amount of Subscriptions received by the Treasurer to the 7th Aug. 1807.....	1,215	14	3
Ditto, to the 23d May, 1809	456	19	0
	1,672	13	3

Leaving a balance due to the Treasurer of 83 13 9 which your Committee cannot doubt your readiness to make good.

This debt has been incurred in carrying into effect the Resolution of the 4th May, 1807, "to return sir Francis Burdett to Parliament, free from every expence to himself."

Your Committee are not insensible to the effect which this great and glorious example is calculated to produce on the people of England, and it will be your duty to persevere and follow up that example which yourselves have set; but they cannot conceal that the elective franchise does not permit that example to be so followed as to produce any important numerical effect in the House of Commons, though they may justly hope that it will even there be viewed with respect.

Your Committee would willingly hope that the sense of the people, peaceably expressed, and supported by a few honest and real Representatives, who shall faithfully persevere in exposing corruption (however attempted to be excused by that general prevalence which increases its enormity), will ultimately succeed in rendering it so disgraceful, that those most interested will be compelled by shame to abandon its defence. In the mean time, you will, however, have the heart-felt satisfaction of having done your duty, and the honour of holding up to public imitation, even in times when corruption is officially acknowledged and defended, one

example of purity, and of keeping alive that spirit of liberty, which alone can tend to regain for the people of England the blessings of the Constitution to which they are entitled.

PROCEEDINGS

In COUNTIES, CITIES, BOROUGHES, &c. relative to the recent INQUIRY in the House of Commons, respecting the Conduct of the DUKE OF YORK. (Continued from p. 798.)

BOROUGH OF WARWICK.

At a respectable Meeting of the Burgesses and Inhabitants of the Borough of Warwick, held at the Court-House, on Tuesday, 16th May, 1809, pursuant to a Requisition presented to the Mayor for that purpose:—THOMAS COLLINS, esq., Mayor, in the Chair:

It was Resolved unanimously—

1. That the Inquiry in the House of Commons, relative to the conduct of his Royal Highness the late Commander in Chief, has proved, to the conviction of the whole country, the existence of flagrant abuses in the administration of public affairs—most disgraceful in themselves to the British name—and most injurious in their effects to the prosperity of the British Nation.

2. That the Thanks of this Meeting be presented to Gwyllim Lloyd Wardle, esq., for his intrepidity in commencing, and his firmness and moderation in conducting that Investigation, which has eventually turned the attention of an indignant people towards a System of Corruption, which no plea of prescription can justify—no sophistry can palliate—no intrigues of party can long shelter from detection and disgrace.

3. That the Thanks of this Meeting are due to the 125 Members of the House of Commons, who by their conduct in the progress, and by their vote at the conclusion of the late Inquiry, have proved themselves the wise and faithful friends, both of the Sovereign and of the People.

4. That the late decision of the House of Commons, standing in direct opposition to the clear and decided opinion, and offering the grossest violence to all the best feelings of the nation, exhibits a most striking and melancholy proof of the present imperfect Representation of the People in Parliament.

5. That in the opinion of this Meeting, a timely, temperate, and well-conducted plan of Parliamentary Reform can alone afford an effectual security against all

great and dangerous abuses in the various departments of government—and that by restoring to the House of Commons its constitutional and rightful character of being a fair and faithful Representation of the People, such Reform would render that body amiable and venerable in the estimation of their constituents—would contribute essentially to the happiness and true glory of the Sovereign—would give their due weight to property, talent, and virtue in the Senate—and promote the collective interest of a free, enlightened, and generous nation.

6. That these Resolutions be signed by the Chairman in behalf of the Meeting, and a copy thereof transmitted to G. L. Wardle, esq.

COUNTY OF CORNWALL.

At a numerous and respectable Meeting of Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders, and other Inhabitants of the County of Cornwall, held at Bodmin, in the said county, on Monday, the 15th inst. in pursuance of public notice given for that purpose, EDWARD COODE, gent. Under-sheriff (in the absence of the High Sheriff) in the Chair:

Resolved, 1st. That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to G. L. Wardle, esq., for his manly and patriotic exertions in bringing forward his Charges against the Duke of York, and for instituting an Inquiry in the course of which the evil practices that have prevailed in the corrupt disposal of Promotions in the Army, have been exposed, and by which the Duke of York has been compelled to resign.

2nd. That the Thanks of this Meeting are particularly due to those Members of Parliament, who by their personal exertions, or by voting in the Minority of 125, afforded unqualified and efficient support to Mr. Wardle in these laudable undertakings.

3rd. That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Representatives of the county, and to all those Members who voted in the Minorities upon the other questions relative to the Duke of York, upon which the House of Commons divided.

4th. That in the opinion of this Meeting the decision of the House of Commons, "that there was no ground to charge his Royal Highness with any connivance at the corrupt and infamous practices disclosed in the evidence," is contrary to the general sense of the nation.

5th. That Corruptions notoriously exist

in other departments of the state, as brought to light by different Committees of the House of Commons.

6th. That the state of the public mind, the example and fate of the nations on the Continent (particularly of France) and the critical situation of the country with respect to foreign powers, imperiously demand a system of constitutional reformation.

7th. That in the opinion of this Meeting the corruptions which have been suffered to accumulate to so grievous an extent in this country, are to be traced to the defective state of the representation.

8th. That it is therefore the firm conviction of this Meeting that a Reform in the Representation of the People in the Commons' House of Parliament is the only effective corrective of existing abuses, and that the only security against future corruptions will be the restoring to the people that share of the elective franchise which the public good requires, and to which they are entitled by the principles of the British Constitution.

Protest against the Resolutions.

We the undersigned, do hereby solemnly enter our Protest against the Resolutions relating to a Reform in Parliament entered into at the County Meeting held at Bodmin, on Monday, the 15th of May 1809, as tending in our opinion to results the most mischievous to the existing constitution and the safety of the country.—Eliot, De Dunstanville, &c. F. Gregor, Francis Glanville, F. Hearle Rodd, Wymond Cory, W. Morshed, Edward Rodd, Thomas Graham, Charles Mayson, W. S. Gully, S. Gurney, William Paul, Ph. Carlyon, C. T. Kempe, John Baron, William Baker, John Pomeroy, John Edyeane, P. S. Pomeroy, H. Rogers, W. Rashleigh, Davies Giddy, John Row, J. A. Norway, John Arthur, F. O'Dogherty, N. Norway, William Ball, Edmund Gilbert, Thomas Hichens, John Rickard, Joseph Hawkey, Charles Rashleigh, William Reynolds, J. Hext, J. J. Seigwin, John Rogers, jun. William Gregor, John Every, J. W. Colenso, Robert Namank, Thomas Robins, R. K. Frost, John Wallis, Thomas Penwarne, E. Hobbing, William Pye, Lewis Marshall, W. Burrows, Edmund Cartheu.

OFFICIAL PAPERS.

AUSTRIA.—*Proclamation of the Archduke Charles, dated Vienna, April 6, 1809.*

THE protection of our country calls us to new exploits. As long as it was pos-

sible to preserve peace by means of sacrifices, and as long as these sacrifices were consistent with the honour of the throne, with the security of the state, and with the welfare of the people, the heart of our bountiful sovereign suppressed every painful feeling in silence; but when all endeavours to preserve happy independence from the insatiable ambition of a foreign conqueror prove fruitless, when nations are falling around us, and when lawful sovereigns are torn from the hearts of their subjects, when in fine the danger of universal subjugation threatens even the happy states of Austria, and their peaceable fortunate inhabitants; then does our country demand its deliverance from us, and we stand forth in its defence.—On you, my dear brother soldiers, are fixed the eyes of the universe, and of all those who still feel for national honours and national prosperity. You shall not share the disgrace of becoming the tools of oppression. You shall not carry on the endless wars of ambition under distant climes. Your blood shall never flow for foreign fleets and foreign covetousness; not on you shall the curse alight to annihilate innocent nations? and over the bodies of the slaughtered defenders of their country to pave the way for a foreigner to the usurped throne. A happier lot awaits you; the liberty of Europe has taken refuge under our banners. Your victories will loose its fetters, and your brothers in Germany, yet in the ranks of the enemy, long for their deliverance. You are engaged in a just cause, otherwise I should not appear at your head.—On the fields of Ulm and Marengo, whereof the enemy so often remind us with ostentatious pride, on these fields will we renew the glorious deeds of Wurtsburgh and Ostrach, of Liptingen (Stockach), and Zurich, of Verona, of the Trebbia and Novi. We will conquer a lasting peace for our country; but the great aim is not to be attained without great virtues. Unconditional subordination, strict discipline, persevering courage, and unshaken steadiness in danger, are the companions of true fortitude. Only a union of will, and a joint co-operation of the whole, lead to victory.—My sovereign and brother has invested me with extensive powers to reward and to punish. I will be every where in the middle of you, and you shall receive the first thanks of your country from your general on the field of battle. The patriotism of many of the Austrian nobility has anticipated your wants: this is a pledge in the fullest

measure, of the public gratitude: but punishment shall also, with inflexible rigour, fall on every breach of duty: merit shall meet with reward, and offence with animadversion, without distinction of person, or rank; branded with disgrace shall the worthless person be cast out to whom life is dearer than his and our honour. Adorned with the marks of public esteem, will I present to our sovereign, to the world, those brave men who have deserved well of their country, and whose names I will ever carry in my heart.—There remains one consideration, which I must put you in mind of: the soldier is only formidable to the enemy in arms; civil virtues must not be strangers to him: out of the field of battle, towards the unarmed citizens and peasants, he is moderate, compassionate, and humane: he knows the evils of war, and strives to lighten them; I will punish every wanton excess with so much greater severity, as it is not the intention of our monarch to oppress neighbouring countries, but to deliver them from their oppressors, and to form with their princes a powerful bond in order to bring about a lasting peace, and to maintain the general welfare and security. Soon will foreign troops, in strict union with us, attack the common enemy. Then, brave companions in arms! honour and support them as your brothers; not vain glorious high words but manly deeds do honour to the warrior; by intrepidity before the enemy you must shew yourselves to be the first soldiers.—Thus then shall I one day lead you back to your own country, followed by the respect of the enemy, and by the gratitude of foreign nations, after having secured by your arms an honourable peace, when the satisfaction of our monarch, the approbation of the world, the rewards of valour, the blessings of your fellow citizens, and the consciousness of deserved repose await you——

CHARLES, Archduke, Generalissimo.

FRENCH ARMY.—*First Bulletin, dated Ratisbon, Apr. 24, 1809.*

THE Austrian army passed the Inn on the 9th April; that was the signal for hostilities, and Austria declared an implacable war against France and her Allies, and the Confederation of the Rhine.—The following were the positions of the French army and her Allies:—The corps of the duke D'Auerstadt at Ratisbon. The corps of the duke of Rivoli at Ulm. The corps of gen. Oudinot at Augsburg. The headquarters at Strauburgh. The three divi-

sions of Bavarians under the duke of Dantzic, were placed as follows: The first division, commanded by the Prince Royal, at Munich; the second, by gen. Deroi, at Landshut; and the third, by gen. de Wrede, at Strauburgh. The Wurtemberg division at Heydenheim. The Saxon troops encamped under the walls of Dresden. The corps of the duchy of Warsaw, commanded by prince Poniatowsky, in the environs of Warsaw.—On the 10th the Austrian troops invested Passau, where they surrounded a battalion of Bavarians, and at the same time invested Kuttain, where there was another battalion of Bavarians; these movements took place without even a shot being fired. The Austrians published the subjoined Proclamation in the Tyrol. The Bavarian court quitted Munich for Dillingen. The Bavarian division which had been at Landshut went to Altorff, on the left bank of the Iser. The division under the command of general de Wrede marched upon Neustadt.—The duke of Rivoli left Ulm for the environs of Augsburg. From the 10th to the 16th the enemy's army advanced from the Inn to the Iser; there were several skirmishes between parties of the cavalry, in which the Bavarians were successful.—On the 16th, at Pfaffenhofen, the 2d and 3d regiments of Bavarian light horse completely routed the hussars of Stipschitz and the Rosenberg dragoons. At the same time the enemy appeared in large bodies for the purpose of forming at Landshut, the bridge was broken down, and the Bavarian division commanded by general Duroy vigorously opposed this movement of the enemy, but being threatened by the columns which had passed the Iser at Moorberg and Freysing, this division retired in good order upon that of general Wrede, and the Bavarian army took a central position upon Neustadt.

Departure of the Emperor from Paris on the 13th.

The Emperor learnt by the telegraph in the evening of the 12th, that the Austrians had passed the Inn, and he set out from Paris almost immediately. He arrived at three o'clock on the morning of the 16th at Louisburg, and in the evening of the same day at Dillingen, where he saw the king of Bavaria, and passed half an hour with that prince, and promised him 15 days to restore him to his capital, to revenge the insults which had been offered to his house, and to make him greater than any of his ancestors had ever been. On the 17th, at two o'clock in the morning

ing, his Majesty arrived at Donauworth, where he immediately established his head-quarters, and gave the necessary orders. On the 18th the head-quarters were removed to Ingolstadt.

Battle of Pfaffenhoffen on the 19th.

On the 19th general Oudinot quitted Augsburg and arrived by break of day at Pfaffenhoffen, where he met three or four thousand Austrians, which he attacked, and took three hundred prisoners. The duke de Rivoli arrived the next day at Pfaffenhoffen. The same day the duke of Auerstadt left Ratisbon to advance to Neustadt, and to draw near to Ingolstadt. It was then evident that the plan of the Emperor was to out-manceuvre the enemy, who had formed near Landshut, and to attack them at the very moment when they, thinking they were commencing the attack, were marching to Ratisbon.

Battle of Tann, on the 19th.

On the 19th, by break of day, the duke D'Auerstadt began his march in two columns. The divisions of Moraud and Gudin formed his right, the divisions of St. Hillaire and Friant formed his left. The division of St. Hillaire arrived at the village of Pressing, and there met the enemy, superior in number, but inferior in bravery, and there the campaign was opened by a battle, which was most glorious to our arms. General St. Hillaire, supported by general Friant, overturned every thing that was opposed to him, and took all the positions of the enemy, killed a great number of them, and made between 6 and 700 prisoners.—The 72d regiment distinguished itself on that day, the 57th maintained its ancient reputation. Sixteen years ago this regiment obtained in Italy the name of the Terrible. In this action they maintained their pretensions to that title; they attacked singly six Austrian regiments in succession, and routed them. On the left, at two o'clock in the afternoon, gen. Moraud also fell in with an Austrian division, which he attacked in front, while the duke of Dantzic, with a corps of Bavarians, which had marched from Abensberg, attacked them in the rear. This division was soon driven from all its positions, and left several hundreds in killed and prisoners. The whole regiment of the dragoons of Levenher was destroyed, and its colonel killed by the Bavarian light-horse. At sun-set the division of the duke of Dantzic formed its junction with that of the duke of Auerstadt. In all these affairs generals St. Hillaire and Friant particularly distinguished themselves. Those unfortunate

Austrian troops who had been led from Vienna with music and with songs, and under a persuasion that there was no longer any French army in Germany, and that they would only have to deal with Wirtemburghers and Bavarians, displayed in the strongest manner, the resentment they felt against their chiefs, for the error into which they had been led; and their terror was the greater when they saw those old bands which they had been accustomed to consider as their master.—In all these battles our loss was inconsiderable, compared with that of the enemy, who lost a number of general officers and others, who were obliged to put themselves forward to give courage to their troops. The prince of Lichtenstein, general Lusignan, and others were wounded. The loss of the Austrians in colonels and officers of lower rank was considerable.

Battle of Abensberg on the 20th.

The Emperor resolved to beat and destroy the corps of the archduke Louis and gen. Keller, which amounted to 60,000 men. On the 20th, his majesty took post at Abensberg; he gave orders to the duke of Auerstadt to keep the corps of Hohenzollern, of Rosenberg, and Lichtenstein, in check, while with the two divisions of Moraud and Guden, the Bavarians and the Wirtemburghers, he attacked the army of the archduke Louis and general Keller in front, and caused the communications of the enemy to be cut off by the duke of Rivoli, who passed by Freyberg, and from thence proceeded to the rear of the Austrian army. The divisions of Moraud and Guden formed the left, and manœuvred under the orders of the duke of Montebello. The Emperor determined to fight that day at the head of the Bavarians and Wirtemburghers. He ordered the officers of these two armies to form a circle, and addressed them in a long speech. The Prince Royal of Bavaria translated into German what he said in French. The Emperor made them sensible of the confidence which he reposed in them. He told the Bavarian officers that the Austrians had always been their enemies, that they now wished to destroy their independence; that for more than 200 years, the Bavarian standard had been displayed against the Austrians. But at this time he would render them so powerful that they alone should be able to contend with the house of Austria. He spoke to the Wirtemburghers of the victories they had obtained over the house of Austria, when they served in the Prussian army, and of

the advantages which they had recently obtained from the campaign in Silesia. He told them all, that the moment was come for carrying the war into the Austrian territory. This speech was repeated to the different companies by the captains, which produced an effect which may easily be conceived. The Emperor then gave the signal for battle, and planned his manœuvres according to the particular character of the troops. General Wrede, a Bavarian officer of great merit, was stationed at Siegenburgh, and attacked an Austrian division, which was opposed to him. General Vandamme, who commanded the Wirtemburghers, attacked the enemy on their right flank. The duke of Dantzic, with the division of the Prince Royal, and that of general Dero, marched toward the village of Renhausen, in order to reach the grand road from Abensberg to Landshut. The duke of Montebello, with his two French divisions, forced the extremity of the enemy's left, and overthrew every thing that was opposed to him, and advanced to Rohr and Rosemburgh. Our cannonade was successful on all points. The enemy, disconcerted by our movements, did not fight for more than an hour, and then beat a retreat. Eight standards, 12 pieces of cannon, and 18,000 prisoners, were the result of this affair, which cost us but a few men.

The Battle of Landshut, and taking of that place.

The battle of Landshut having laid open the flank of the Austrian army, and all their magazines, the Emperor, by break of day, on the 21st, marched upon Landshut. The duke of Istria defeated the enemy's cavalry in the plain before that city. The general of division Mouten, made the grenadiers of the 17th advance to the charge on the bridge, forming the head of a column. This bridge, which was of wood, was set on fire, but that was not an obstacle to our infantry, who forced it, and penetrated into the city. The enemy, driven from their position, were then attacked by the duke of Rivoli, who had advanced by the right bank. Landshut fell into our power, and with Landshut we took 30 pieces of cannon, 9,000 prisoners, 600 ammunition waggons, 3,000 baggage waggons, and the hospitals and

magazines which the Austrians had began to form. Some couriers and aides-de-camp of the commander in chief, prince Charles, and some convoys of wounded men, coming from Landshut, also fell into our hands.

Battle of Ecmuhl, on the 22d.

While the battle of Abensberg and that of Landshut produced such important consequences, the archduke Charles had formed a junction with the Bohemian army under Kollowrath, and obtained some partial success at Ratisbon. One thousand of the 65th, who were left to guard the bridge of Ratisbon, and who had not received orders to retreat, having expended their cartridges, and being surrounded by the Austrians, were obliged to surrender. This event made an impression upon the Emperor, and he swore that in 24 hours Austrian blood should flow in Ratisbon to resent the insult which had been offered to his arms. During this time the dukes of Auerstadt and Dantzic held in check the corps of Rosenberg, Hohenzollern, and Lichtenstein. There was no time to be lost. The Emperor began his march from Landshut, with the two divisions of the duke of Montebello, the corps of the duke of Rivoli, the cuirassiers of Nansoutz and St. Sulpice, and the Wirtemburgh division. At two o'clock in the afternoon they arrived opposite Ecmuhl, where the four corps of the Austrian army, consisting of 110,000 men, had taken a position under the command of the archduke Charles. The duke of Montebello attacked the enemy on the left, with the division of Gudin. On the first signal the divisions of the dukes of Auerstadt and Dantzic, and the division of light cavalry of general Montbrun, took their position. One of the most beautiful sights which war can present then presented itself, 110,000 men attacked on all points, turned on their left, and successively driven from all their positions, the detail of the events would be too long; it is sufficient to say, that the enemy were completely routed; that they lost the greater part of their cannon, and a great number of prisoners; and that the Austrians, driven from the woods which cover Ratisbon, were forced into the plain, and cut off by cavalry.

(To be continued.)